CALL of CTHULHU

HORROR ROLEPLAYING



Unfortunate Events Deck

How to use the Unfortunate Events Deck

The Keeper may choose to present a player with a card from this deck during play. The player receiving the card should apply its effects to their investigator immediately.

Keepers are advised to pre-select appropriate event cards rather than drawing randomly as each card is unique and should only be used for the proper situation. For example, the Death Scene card should only be given to a player whose investigator is alone and is about to die—the player knows their character has bitten the dust, and so giving them the card isn't a surprise, rather it is a way for them go out with a bang.

Some cards describe the effects of spells cast against an investigator; in most situations the investigator concerned may be completely unaware that they have been targeted by a spell. In such cases, the Keeper is advised to make opposed rolls secret (to figure if the spell is successful), avoiding arousing too much suspicion in case the spell fails. Note that specific spell names have been left off the cards, allowing the Keeper to apply them as best suits their game.

Other cards provide 'secret' notes to players, giving them just enough information on how to act

How to use the Unfortunate Events Deck (Continued)

or what they should do next. The Keeper is advised to provide further information to the player concerned as necessary as the game progresses.

Some cards may be used to enhance the story, perhaps advancing the plot or introducing inconveniences, or red herrings. Be wary of putting too many obstacles in your player's paths as these can both derail the story and frustrate the players.

Keepers retain the right to add or modify the effects of any of the cards, perhaps reducing damage amounts or allowing players further options than those stated.

Use these cards wisely as they can dramatically affect the game.

A few blank cards have been included in this deck, allowing Keepers to devise and create their own unfortunate events to add those here, or to simply use as secret message cards.



Bad Dreams

Bad Dreams

"Don't let me sleep!"

You awake from the most horrible nightmare you can ever remember having. Sweat pours from you, drenching the sheets, and your body is covered in bruises, scratches, and marks (lose 1 hit point and 1 Sanity point).

From now onwards, every time you fall asleep you suffer from hideous nightmares, losing 1 Sanity point each time.

If you wish, you may make an **INT** roll to see if you can remember your nightmare: if you succeed, take a further 1D4 Sanity points loss—the Keeper will describe what you can remember. If you fail the INT roll, you remember nothing clearly, just the fact that you are completely terrified to fall asleep.

This continues until otherwise directed by the Keeper.



Bad Luck

Bad Luck

"Everything is going wrong!"

The fates are against you. Reduce your current Luck by half.

(If using the Optional Luck Spend rule, you may not spend Luck to adjust rolls).

This condition continues until advised otherwise by the Keeper.



Bad Squid

Bad Squid

"Urgh! Out of my way! I'm gonna be sick!"

Despite a very enjoyable meal, something you have eaten has not agreed with you. Perhaps it was bad squid?

You sweat profusely, shiver, and shake as hot and cold flushes affect your body. A headache grows in intensity, and you find it difficult to focus and think clearly. Perhaps a day's rest will sort you out, or maybe you should see a doctor?

Roll 1D4+1 to determine how many days you are ill.

Each day you are ill, make a **CON** roll: if you fail, lose 1 hit point. If the result is a Hard (half) success then your sickness clears up the following day. Additionally, a successful **Medicine** roll gets you back on your feet.

While you are ill, all STR, DEX, skill, and combat rolls are made with one penalty die.



Being Watched?

"Ever get that feeling that you're not alone?"

Every time you turn around or look over your shoulder, he's there, watching you. You are sure of it.

How long this person has been spying on you is difficult to say; perhaps it's just this afternoon, or it could have been for days…



Blackmail

From out of the blue you receive a letter with no postmark, nor sign of how it arrived in your possession. Your full name is written on the envelope.

Inside, the letter is handwritten in flowing ink script, saying:

Your past deeds have been uncovered.

I will reveal all of them to those dearest to you.

I will reveal all of them to the authorities.

UNLESS YOU PAY.

Wear a carnation in your buttonhole today and I will know you accept, and I will contact you with details of what to do.

Don't wear the carnation and face the consequences of your actions!



Blinded

Blinded

"I can't see!"

Without warning you have suddenly gone blind.

All rolls requiring sight (physical co-ordination, combat, etc.) require Extreme successes (treated as Regular successes). The Keeper may also impose penalty dice if appropriate.

If you are presently in a dangerous situation (such as standing on a high ledge, climbing a wall, etc.) you may be required to make a **DEX** roll to maintain your safety.

Your sight does not return until advised by the Keeper.



Bound by Command

Bound by Command

"You cannot touch me!"

You begin to hear a voice in your head that tells you that you cannot harm a certain individual (the Keeper will confirm who).

You know with absolute certainty that no matter what you attempt to do, you are unable to inflict harm upon this individual, and cannot even muster the desire to so.

Any attempt you make to inflict harm upon this person will not succeed until otherwise directed by the Keeper.



Corruption of the Flesh

Corruption of the Flesh

"LOOK AT ME! HELP!"

Suddenly your skin begins to corrupt; rotting and festering before your very eyes. Your skin tears and thick, yellow pus seeps out, followed by your rotting internal organs. The smell alone is unbearable.

Those around seem oblivious to your condition.

Make a **Sanity** roll (1D4/1D10).

In seconds you collapse on the floor unconscious. When you awake, 1D6 round later, you appear whole and normal.

Your Keeper will advise you of the long-term affects, if any...



Deadly Salt Water

Deadly Salt Water

"Gurgle!"

One minute you are fine and the next you begin to choke as if you had taken too large a gulp of water. You feel your chest expand and your mouth fills, as you start to choke up salt water!

Breathing quickly becomes difficult as you feel salt water filling up your lungs. Take 1D8 hit points damage.

Make a **CON** roll each round:

Failure—you suffer a further 1D8 damage (until death).

Success—you don't lose any hit points this round (but roll again next round).

Extreme Success—the water seems to evaporate and you stop drowning.



Death Scene

"The end of the line."

Your investigator is about to die. Pick and act out one of the following, appropriate to the situation, as your last action before you succumb to oblivion:

• A wailing, terrible scream that fades into nothingness.

• A cry of, "NO! IT CAN"T BE!"

• A frantic scraping sound as your last action is to scratch a single word on to the ground.

• A sharp wince as you use your own blood to scrawl a word on a nearby surface or wall.

• A shout of, "Take that you fiend!"

• A determined cry, "If I'm going out, then you're coming with me!"



Dumbfounded

"Tell me what to do…"

Your mind has become addled.

You have difficulty thinking for yourself. Like some kind of brainless zombie, you look to others for direction, willingly obeying the commands given to you by those around you.

This condition lasts until the Keeper says otherwise.



Evil Whisper

Evil Whisper

"Did you hear that?"

You hear someone whisper something nearby. It's so quietly spoken that you can hardly make it out. Nobody else seems to have heard it.

You can't be sure, but you think it was:

"…that's right… kill 'em all…"



Feverish Chills

Feverish Chills

"What's up with me?!"

Feverish chills suddenly rack your body. Terrible pains shoot through your hands and legs. You are burning hot to the touch and feel nauseous.

Lose 1D6 points of **STR**, **CON,** and **DEX** (roll separately for each), each day until the Keeper says the illness has passed or any of these stats have reached 0 (meaning that the illness has caused your death).

All skill and combat rolls are made with one penalty die while the fever has hold.

If still alive, lost characteristics return at a rate of 1D4 per day once the chills have passed.



Followed?

Followed?

“I could have sworn I’m being tailed.”

For the last hour you have the sense of being followed.

As you make your way, it feels like someone, or something, is dogging your tracks.



Hotel Fire

Hotel Fire

“Someone call the fire fighters!”

You return to your lodgings only to find the place ablaze! A crowd of people stand watching as fire fighters attempt to deal with the situation. You are not allowed anywhere near the building for 1D10 hours.

Make a **Luck** roll to determine the level of damage:

Success—the fire has caused a lot of damage; however, most of the guest rooms are more or less intact. Your possessions, maybe singed a little, are otherwise are fine.

Failure—it’s a complete disaster; the building had burned down to the ground taking all your possessions with it.



Life Drain

Life Drain

"I feel all washed-out..."

You feel your very life force suddenly ebbing away from you, as if *something* were sucking it out of you.

Lose 1D6 Magic points.

You feel very weak all of a sudden, falling to the ground unconscious for 1D10 rounds.



Malfunction

Malfunction

"Darn it!"

The item you are using is faulty, causing something bad to happen.

Whatever you were trying to achieve blows-up in your face. Make a **Luck** roll:

Success: you drop or move quickly away from the item, clear from any potential harm.

Failure: the item causes you harm, perhaps it punctures your skin, grazes you, explodes, or worse! The Keeper will advise you on how many hit points damage you take.



Memory Loss

Memory Loss

"I don't remember anything!"

Try as you might, you have no memory of the events of the scene just passed.

It is as if that part of your memory is shrouded in fog and you can recall no details of place, persons, or any of the actions that took place.



Missing

Missing

"Hang on! Where is it?!"

You reach for the item you seek only to find it is missing!

Now, just where could it have got to?



Monsters!

Monsters!

"Run! Run for your lives!"

You hear a strange, high-pitched hum. Before you a ball of light appears, which rapidly grows in size. A terrible sense of foreboding overpowers you as you realize something is coming through the portal of light in front of you!

Awful appendages appear through the portal, reaching forward, and sensing the air. A terrible stench pervades. You know with certainty that the thing knows you are there…



Mysterious Note

Mysterious Note

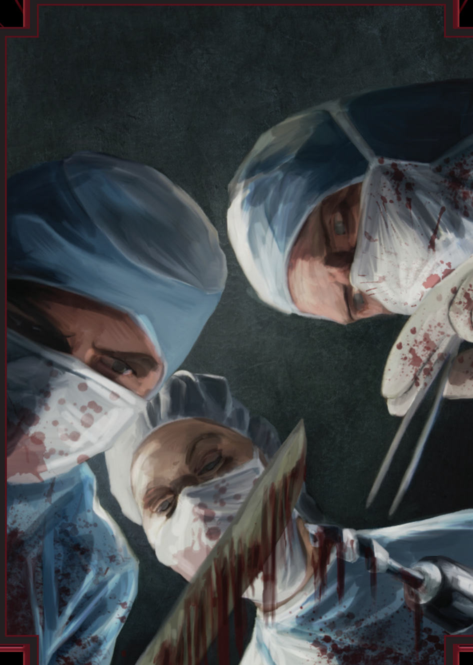
"What's this?"

You reach into your pocket and pull out a mysterious note that was not there before. Someone must have placed it in your pocket…

Opening the note, you find a hand scrawled message that reads:

Meet me tonight outside the library at midnight.

Come alone.



No Longer in Control

No Longer in Control

“I’m your master now…”

An extra-dimensional parasite has somehow crawled into your head.

The parasite, now comfortably lodged in your brain, controls your every action. You must obey its commands, which generally mean that it wants you to act without mercy, be cruel to others, and inflict pain when the opportunity arises.

Do not reveal this to anyone else.

Of course, your new master does not wish to be discovered and will prevent you from telling anyone about your condition; neither will it allow you to harm yourself, or draw unwanted attention to yourself.

The Keeper will advise you further.



Note in a Book

Note in a Book

“Something fell out of the book…”

While looking through the books an old piece of paper falls out of one of them.

On the aged, yellow paper is written a set of co-ordinates and nothing else.

The Keeper will advise you of what you discover if you decide to find out what is at the co-ordinates…



Police Trouble

Police Trouble

"But Officer, let me explain…"

You have been arrested by the police, who wish to question you regarding a recent incident.

It plainly must be a case of mistaken identity, as the detective at the station keeps calling you by a name that's not your own. He wants to know where you were last night, and what you were doing.

Providing you have a suitable alibi (which will be checked), you are free to leave after 1D6+1 hours (see following).

Hopefully, you have nothing particularly incriminating about your person that the police would find interesting…



Possessed

Possessed

"At last, a body I can call my own!"

You have been possessed by the mind of an evil sorcerer, whose will is stronger than yours. This alien mind has complete control of your body and memories.

Do not reveal this to anyone else.

Lose 1D20 Sanity points—however ignore any "insane" results until such a time as you are free of the possession (then immediately apply the insanity).

The Keeper will provide you with details of your new master's plans; however for now, your master will maintain the pretence of being "you."



Premonition

"Don't ask me how I know,
but don't open that door!"

You suddenly fall unconscious. While you are out, you have a vision of the future, viewing a scene yet to be fulfilled. Make a **Sanity** roll (1/1D4).

As you come around, the facts and details are hazy, yet you know with certainty that when that scene takes place, you will know and remember.

You may hold on to this card and play it when facing a choice. When played, the Keeper will advise you which of the choices is most in your best interest.

You may hold and play this card only once, returning it to the Keeper once played.



Raining Blood

"The rain! It's red!"

A sudden harsh wind blows and black clouds gather above you. Rain begins to fall; however, rain should not be red!

Blood falls from the sky, covering you in seconds.

Make a **Sanity** roll (1/1D4).



Robbery in Progress

Robbery in Progress

"Don't anybody move! This is a robbery!"

All of a sudden you hear someone shouting and realize you are caught in the middle of robbery. People scream and everyone is ordered to lie face down on the ground.

Decide on what you do: take Option A or B.

Option A

You comply and do as directed. Within a few seconds the criminals are gone, taking your wallet or purse, any jewelery, valuable looking possessions, and bags you had with you.

Option B

You refuse to comply and take a beating, suffering 1D6+1 hit points damage. Fortunately, your act of defiance buys some time for the police to show up, and the criminals hot foot it away before they have a chance to take any of your possessions.



Sickness

Sickness

"Oooh, I suddenly feel all a bother!"

You are growing weaker. You don't feel right. Perhaps you have picked-up a bug or worse…

Make a **CON** roll each day for 1D6 days; if passed, you lose no hit points; if you fail, lose 1D4-1 hit points. If any of these rolls succeeds with an Extreme (fifth) success then the following day the illness has gone. If you suffer the loss of half or more of your hit points from the sickness then medical care is required (treat as a Major Wound).

Whilst the sickness is upon you, all skill and combat rolls are made with one penalty die.



Spider Bite

"Ouch!"

You reach your hand inside and suddenly something bites you! Quickly withdrawing your hand, you see a large black spider rapidly scurrying away.

Make a **Luck** roll:

Success—lose 1 hit point damage. It's just nicked your flesh.

Failure—lose 1D10 hit points damage plus poison has entered your system—you suffer from convulsions for 1D6 hours (taking 1 penalty die on all skill and combat rolls in this period). A successful Extreme (fifth) CON roll will halve both the damage and the time spent suffering the bite's affects.



Spontaneous Human Combustion

"Keep away from me!"

Every time you touch another person, you immediately see that person spontaneously combust. Within seconds they are consumed with fire, their body suddenly blackened, charred and smoking, falling to your feet.

While you soon realize it is just a hallucination, the effect is still highly disconcerting.

You must make a **Sanity** roll each time this happens. With a success you don't lose any Sanity, however once you have failed a Sanity roll you lose 1D4 Sanity points immediately and are not required to roll again—instead, each time thereafter that you touch a person, you suffer the hallucination and lose 1 Sanity point (no roll).

This continues until directed otherwise by the Keeper.



Stolen Car

Stolen Car

"I don't believe it!"

You return to where you had parked your car only to find it missing—stolen!

If you report your car stolen to the police, make a **Luck** roll:

Success—your car is found 1D10 hours later by the police. Despite being low on gas, the car is in good shape.

Failure—your car is found 1D10 days later by the police. The car looks like its been in an accident, as it was found battered and upside down. The Keeper will advise on whether the car is drivable and what the repair bill amounts to.

Note: If any valuables were in the car (including weapons) then a **Luck** roll should be made for each item to determine if it was stolen or remains in the vehicle.



Stolen

Stolen

"Look at the state of this place!"

Returning to your room, you find your belongings strewn everywhere, as if a herd of cattle had run through.

Someone has clearly broken in and searched through your possessions. It is going to take a while to put everything back in order, let alone work out what, if anything, has been stolen…



Strange Melody

Strange Melody

"Can't you hear it too?"

You begin to hear a strange, undulating melody. Looking around, you cannot see or find its source. Wherever you go, the melody is there.

You quickly realize the melody is not coming from an outside source, it is in your head, and nothing you do seems to quell or diminish its maddening, repeating tune.

Lose 1 Sanity point each day until directed otherwise by the Keeper.



Strange Visions

Strange Visions

"Look!"

All of a sudden you see before you an old tramp, whom you could have sworn wasn't there a moment ago. A long, white beard hangs from his withered features, and his eyes stare into yours.

He raises his left hand, upon which is a strange mark consisting of twisting circular lines that seem to move, spiraling outwards. Hypnotically you stare at the weird geometry—how long you do this for is impossible to know.

No one around you seems to notice the man, who opens his mouth saying:

"You have been chosen."

Before you can respond, the old tramp chuckles and is gone. You look at your watch and realize two hours have passed.



Sudden Temperature Drop

Sudden Temperature Drop

"Man, it's cold!"

One moment everything is fine and the next you are freezing. You experience a sudden, rapid, temperature drop. Your body temperature plummets, your teeth chatter, and ice begins to accumulate on your hair and clothing.

Immediately suffer 1D4 hit points damage, and take a further 1D4 damage each round until you leave this place (as determined by the Keeper).



The Horror!

The Horror!

"Aaaeeeiiiii!"

You are overwhelmed by sudden, stark terror.

Make a **Sanity** roll (1/1D6).

You must run away from where you are, compelled to retreat to a safe place where you would normally feel secure.



The Unspeakable Promise

"I willingly devote myself to thee, oh master."

You have succumbed and made an oath to **The Unspeakable One**.

Do not reveal this to anyone else.

You are now the willing servant of **The Unspeakable One**. Think of all the sport you will have misleading your former allies and bringing them to their inevitable doom.

You will be rewarded—the Keeper will advise you of the special boon that you will receive from your dark, unspeakable god.



The Voice in Your Head

"You know you want to..."

You become increasing aware of a voice in your head. Is it your conscience or something far darker?

The voice knows you. It understands your blackest desires, wanting and telling you to let go of your moral restraints—to live without regard for the norms of society. It wants you to take what you want, to steal and even perhaps to kill, and to put yourself first above all others.

From now on, until otherwise directed by the Keeper, make a **Luck** roll whenever you are faced with a moral choice. If you fail the Luck roll, you must take the dark path and act out the avenue of action that most benefits yourself.



The Wrong Briefcase

"But I could have sworn this is my one!"

You open your briefcase to review your papers and notes, only to find they are not there!

In fact, despite the briefcase looking exactly like your own, it must be someone else's as it contains only some musty pillowcases and an old, worn copy of *Moby Dick*.

All your evidence, work, and notes are missing.



Unexpected Remains

"How did THAT get in here?!"

Opening your bags, you find to your horror a severed and bloody hand resting amongst your possessions. How it came to be there is anyone's guess.

Make a **Sanity** roll (0/1D4).



Unnatural Aging

Unnatural Aging

"I feel so tired..."

Your body trembles, your joints begin to ache, and you feel your skin stretching like elastic. You feel dizzy and it seems as though your entire body is being put through a mangle.

Make a **CON** roll to remain conscious or collapse for 1D4 rounds.

The pains and shaking cease, and you look at your hands to see that the skin is wrinkled and almost translucent. With a terrible recognition, you realize you have unnaturally aged. Make a **Sanity** roll (1/1D4).

Roll 1D20 and add the result to your current age, applying any characteristic modifiers as per the aging rules in the **Creating Investigators** chapter of the *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook.*



WHACK!

WHACK!

"Aaaaahhhhhhh!"

A sudden, irresistible and massive invisible force whacks you, sending you hurtling to the ground some distance from where you were standing.

Make a **DEX** roll:

Success—lose 1D4 hit points damage and fall to the floor.

Failure—lose 1D6 hit points damage and fall unconscious for 1D10 rounds.





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Credits

Devised, written, and edited by Mike Mason.

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Box design by Nick Nacario.

This accessory pack is best used with the roleplaying game CALL OF CTHULHU, available separately.

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